



COPYRIGHT, 1896, BY F. TERRYSON MEELY.

CHAPTER VII.

'Twas the day before Christmas, and Frayne was merry with the music of Christmas preparation. Ever since revels the men had been busy at work, and while most of them were engaged in the decoration of their barracks, messrooms and the little chapel, Terry Rorko, with a good sized squad, was still putting the finishing touches on the assembly hall. An odd thing had happened that morning. No one had ever known that fellow Grace to offer to do a stroke of work of any kind, especially where Rorko had anything to do with the matter, yet here he came, right after reveille, to tell that very man that it was all the same to him he'd take the place of Higgins, who had been put on guard, and would help at the assembly room.

"There's no whiskey to be had there, Grace, if it's like what you want, and you look more'n like to answer me this now, but what's been with you come runnin' in at 1 o'clock this mornin'?"

"On a still hunt, corporal," answered Grace, with a leer. "I'm to keep away from whiskey this day I'm ready to work with you. I'm supernumerary of the guard."

"You were drinkin' last night, and you've had yer eye opener and brain clouder this mornin', had scan to ye. There's an internal revenue tax on the breath of ye that would make an exciseman jealous. But, God be good to us, av it's to kape mischief away from the garrison this day I'll go. G'wan now, but what's that ye've no liquor about ye, Grace?"

"Devil a drop outside of my skin, corporal."

"Then kape out of reach of it and out of the way of the ladies, lest the sight of yer ugly mug would throw them into fits. G'wan," and Grace went. "Was it ye, ye took that devil, that gave that sweet lady her fright last night?" he continued reflectively. "There's no provin' it beyond the boot tracks, and they'd fit worse look-in' feet than yours. It's the mark of the gentleman that's left to ye. Yes, sergeant, I'll kape me eye on him."

And then, in response to a suggestion from the senior noncommissioned officer of the troop, who came forth from the office at the moment. "The captain's hot about that business of last night, and like as not there's the blackguard. Now, what on earth does he want to be playin' Peepin' Tom about the officers' quarters?"

"No good, of course, but we can prove nothing, as you say, except that he was out of quarters and wasn't at Bunko Jim's after 11 o'clock. He was here and in bed when I inspected."

Very little was known about this episode. Mrs. Dauntton had quickly retired under the ministrations of Ellis and Mr. Ormsby, and, half laughing, half crying, had declared that just as she reached the window the blind swung slowly back and the moonlight fell full on the head and shoulders of a man with a fur cap, black beard and soldier's overcoat. She could describe no other features. He saw her at the same instant. Each read the other's excited, nervous state it was too much of a shock. Ellis, who at first had been prone to attribute Helen's prostration to the interview with Ormsby, recalled the provoker she herself had seen and could not but corroborate Mrs. Dauntton's story. Jack had rushed out, only to find boot tracks in the hall and a faint, unfastened blind, but no other sign of a man. Mrs. Farrar was kept in total ignorance of the affair, and only Leale and Will at first were taken into the secret, though the captain at once went to consult his trusty noncommissioned officers. All the same, though, Helen languished all day, and in the morning came, and she and Ellis, parting for the night with but few words and each feeling conscious of the gulf between them, passed a restless and disquieting night. Just what mischief that fellow Grace was meditating puzzled not a little the honest pate of Terry Rorko. For a time the man looked busily, silently, fugging bundles of greens into the hall and bare, striped branches out. Once or twice, in answer to chaffing remarks of the other men, he had retaliated. Once again, colliding with Crow Knife at the door, he had muttered an angry curse and bade the redskin keep out of his way unless he coveted trouble. The Indian's eyes flashed vengeance, but he spoke no word.

It was just after guard mounting that Grace had offered his services, when, as supernumerary, he really did not have to work at all and was not properly detailable for any such fatigue duty. By 10 o'clock, however, it was apparent that no other man present that he was drinking more liquor and had it concluded probably somewhere about the premises or in his overcoat. Rorko warned him and got a sullen reply. Not a minute after, although strict orders had been given against smoking, because of the flimsy nature of the structure and the large quantity of inflammable material, he drew back his heavily booted foot as though to let drive a furious kick.

"Instantly the Indian interposed. 'Don't kick!' he said. 'Hold your hoof there!' shouted Rorko, and others of the men joined in their cry of warning. Wonderingly he looked about him on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"

"The colonel is, and as if he didn't roll the sight. Small blame to him."

"It's a saying of my people," cried Crow in his slow, solemn tone, "Whom the eyes of the dead call must rise and follow."

"You creaking!" hissed Grace, leaping to his feet and rushing at the Indian, but Rorko threw himself between them.

"Play wild fire when ye may, man, but niver w'd a tame tiger. Hush, now. Go out this door and cool that crazy head of yers. Here come the ladies."

Instantly the excited group scattered, the men resuming their work as though at no time thought of crime or quarrel and the women, who had been waiting on the quickly gathered group, swaying a bit unsteadily even now.

"Why not?" he scowlingly, sullenly, thickly asked. "What harm's there kicking a redtooth that's almost broken my shin? What's the matter with you fellows, anyhow?"

"It isn't the box, ye goneral, it's what's inside of it! That's Colonel Farrar's picture!"